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CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM · LUCHE POR EL COMUNISMO · PLP

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ISIS Wild Card in Imperialist Fight

The Next Oil War

A fundamentalist group, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS), has seized Iraq's second biggest city, Mosul, and its biggest refinery. Though still a minor capitalist player, ISIS adds a volatile element to the local and inter-imperialist competition over Iraqi oil, and its influence is growing. If the group reaches the point of threatening Baghdad, raiding ExxonMobil's Iraqi installations or imperiling Saudi Arabia, the current conflict could soon escalate.

Intensifying competition for Iraq's oil further destabilizes a nation long ravaged by U.S. imperialism. From 1990 to 2012, invasions by the administrations of presidents George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush and their British allies, along with President Bill Clinton's food and medicine embargo, killed 3.3 million people in Iraq — including half a million children — and forced four million to flee their homes (Global Research). More than 4,000 U.S. soldiers died in those wars. Hundreds of thousands returned home with severe injuries and post-traumatic stress disorder. Hundreds committed suicide.



2006 ISIS map of its projected realm

Liberal Obama and Mass Murder

All of these workers are victims of capitalism. A system run for maximum profit creates the imperialist rivalries that lead inevitably to war. Millions of U.S. workers protested against the bosses who launched the wars in Iraq, protests which stopped with Obama's election. But now it should be clear that you cannot stop imperialist carnage by electing Democratic Party liberals like Barack Obama instead of Republicans like the Bushes. Obama expanded the war in Afghanistan. He sent drones to kill by air over Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia. His next move may be to bomb ISIS forces and kill more masses of innocent civilians — a script that was written three years ago, when the U.S. pulled out of Iraq after wrecking the country and feeding into mass sectarian murder. Two hundred seventy-five ground troops are already being sent back to Iraq. The rulers' system inevitably creates imperialist rivalries and economic crises that can only be settled by war.

Untold others will be slaughtered in the next shoot-out over oil. Meanwhile, U.S. rulers will use the ISIS threat to their interests to divide workers with anti-Muslim racism. Only communist-led revolution, smashing all bosses and profits, can end these horrors. Only the workers' seizure of state power can eliminate mass poverty, unemployment, racism, sexism and war. In more than twenty countries, on five continents, that's what Progressive Labor Party is fighting for. Join now!

Oil Plan for II

ISIS claims it wants to set up a religious Sunni sovereign state under strict Islamic rule. In fact, it has less spiritual ambitions. Vox Media (sponsored by U.S. imperialists' General Electric) dug up a 2006 ISIS map of its projected realm (see above).

Vox reported that ISIS's plan, "given the contours of the map, is to take over oil lands in eastern Iraq and western Syria." The fundamentalist oil barons revealed their profit plans on June 13, when they grabbed the huge refinery at Baiji in Salahaddin province. The next day, the Kurdish news outlet Rudaw reported that "the facility, which … processes 320,000 barrels per day, is fully intact and continues to operate under orders from [ISIS]." In addition, they "also were in control of the nearby Ajeel oil field."

Behind this upheaval are the big imperialists' proxy wars, as the U.S. giant ExxonMobil and Russian counterpart Lukoil maneuver to make deals with Iraq and Iran. The second Iraq War won Exxon the rights to drill Iraq's vast West Qurna field in the south. But the Iraqi president, Iran-leaning Nouri al-Maliki, imposed harsh terms. At current prices, Maliki gets about $100 per barrel of oil; Exxon gets only $2.

Cashing in on Kurdistan

Exxon has cut far more profitable production deals with the semi-autonomous Kurds, deals Baghdad deems illegal. In defiance of Maliki's laws (see box on page 2), Exxon is exporting oil from Kurdistan through Turkey, with the added strategic incentive of landing Turkey on the U.S. side in any potential global conflict.

So far, the ISIS crisis has benefitted the Exxon-Kurdish-Turkish axis. According to Quartz (6/13), a website owned by mainstream imperialist Atlantic Media, President Maliki is an "early apparent loser in the Iraq upheaval." Among the early winners, Quartz reported, were Kurdistan and the "international oil companies that have defied Baghdad to work there [and] now appear to have a clearer shot at exporting their crude."

The Kurd-Exxon link explains why New York Times' columnist Thomas Friedman, a prominent mouthpiece for U.S. imperialism, was cheering on Kurdistan's boss-

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OUR FIGHT

✬Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

✬Only the dictatorship of the working class — communism — can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

✬Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

✬While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

✬Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

✬Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit black, Latino, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

✬Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women — sexism — and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

✬Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✬Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

✬Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

Oil Wars: Bosses Profit Off Mass Murder of Workers

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es: "Other than the Kurds, we have no friends in this fight" (6/15/14). For Friedman, "we" stands for bosses like Exxon and the media that serves them, not the working class they exploit. Meanwhile, according to Rudaw (6/10), "The Kurdish government has tightened security around an oilfield operated by ExxonMobil in Baashiqa, a town that falls within 'disputed territories' claimed by both Baghdad and the Kurdistan Regional Government."

Maliki has accused Exxon of aiding ISIS, at least indirectly by backing the Nujaifi brothers who are pro-Exxon Sunni politicians. One is the governor of Nineveh province — where Mosul, the capital, is now in ISIS hands. The other is a member of Iraq's parliament. As Reuters reported (6/13/14), "[Maliki] considered the fledgling alliance between the Kurds and Nujaifis in welcoming Exxon Mobil to Nineveh Province to extract oil as a threat to a centralized state. He also noted that the Nujaifis had spoken of creating an independent Sunni region and characterized it as a betrayal."

ISIS: Exxon's Frankenstein

By allying with Sunnis against Shiite prime minister Maliki, Exxon may have helped create a monster it cannot control. If ISIS were to move north and overcome Kurdish fighters, U.S. rulers would lose their main ally in Iraq in any broader conflict with China or Russia. This might explain the Exxon-backed Kurds' seizure of Kirkuk, the region's primary oil city, as a wedge against both ISIS and Iran-leaning Maliki.

If ISIS threatens Baghdad, Obama could find himself depending on anti-U.S. Iranian forces to prop up fellow Shiite Maliki. Teheran has already sent two thousand soldiers to Iraq. Iran's prestige will soar if these troops see action, which in turn would benefit the ayatollahs' allies in Beijing and Moscow.

U.S. rulers are reduced to trying to buttress a weak Maliki government. They have no real alternative. The weakness of their position is revealed in their agreement to open talks with Iran, the same regime they've targeted with sanctions in their nuclear dispute.

The worst scenario for Obama and the bosses he serves would be the spread of ISIS fundamentalism into Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil producer. Although the Saudis initially supported the Sunni rebels in Syria, including the group that became ISIS, they now consider ISIS "and its goal of a hard-line caliphate [a sovereign state under strict Islamic rule] too extreme and a threat" (New York Times, 6/13).

In its wars for control over Iraq and the fifth-largest oil reserves in the world, U.S. imperialism murdered more than three million workers. Imagine what our class would suffer if the grand prize in Saudi Arabia were at stake!✪

Exxon Breaks Maliki Ban

Defying the Maliki regime, ExxonMobil and other Big Oil outfits have been piping Kurdish crude to storage farms in Turkey for the last year. After capacity peaked in May, the Turks loaded two million barrels onto two tankers. Baghdad called the cargo "smuggled and stolen" and warned off buyers with threats of legal action.

One tanker first sailed to the U.S. Gulf Coast, suggesting it would be offloaded at a U.S. terminal. But suddenly it changed course and now lies off the coast of Morocco, at the entrance to the Mediterranean. The second tanker, once headed for Italy, rides at anchor near the Greek island of Crete. On June 15, the Kurdish news agency Rudaw reported the cargoes have "been sold to buyers in India and Austria." Exxon and its allies appear to have broken Maliki's ban.

NYPD Unleashes Racist Violence in NYC Projects

HARLEM, June 13 — Today 150 angry residents of two Harlem housing projects and allied fighters held a militant rally in the pouring rain at the State Office Building nearby. Longtime local church friends gave out fliers and invited protesters to our next action group meeting and a flier decrying racism and calling for revolt against racist police and housing authority abuses. Progressive Labor Party distributed 60 CHALLENGEs.

Grant and Manhattanville are two huge public housing projects on either side of 125 St. in West Harlem. Altogether there are about 4,500 residents and 1,900 youth.

The residents, poor and nearly all black, are treated like dirt by the racist cops and politicians. There are no after-school programs in the local schools, and there are none in the projects either. There isn't even an indoor recreational area, and the outside sports courts are in poor repair.

The unemployment rate for young men is around 50 percent, and there are no job training programs. Columbia University has taken over the property across the street to expand its campus, driven hundreds out of their homes, and is gentrifying the whole area. In return, they had promised to spend millions to provide services and opportunities to local youth, but have done nothing.

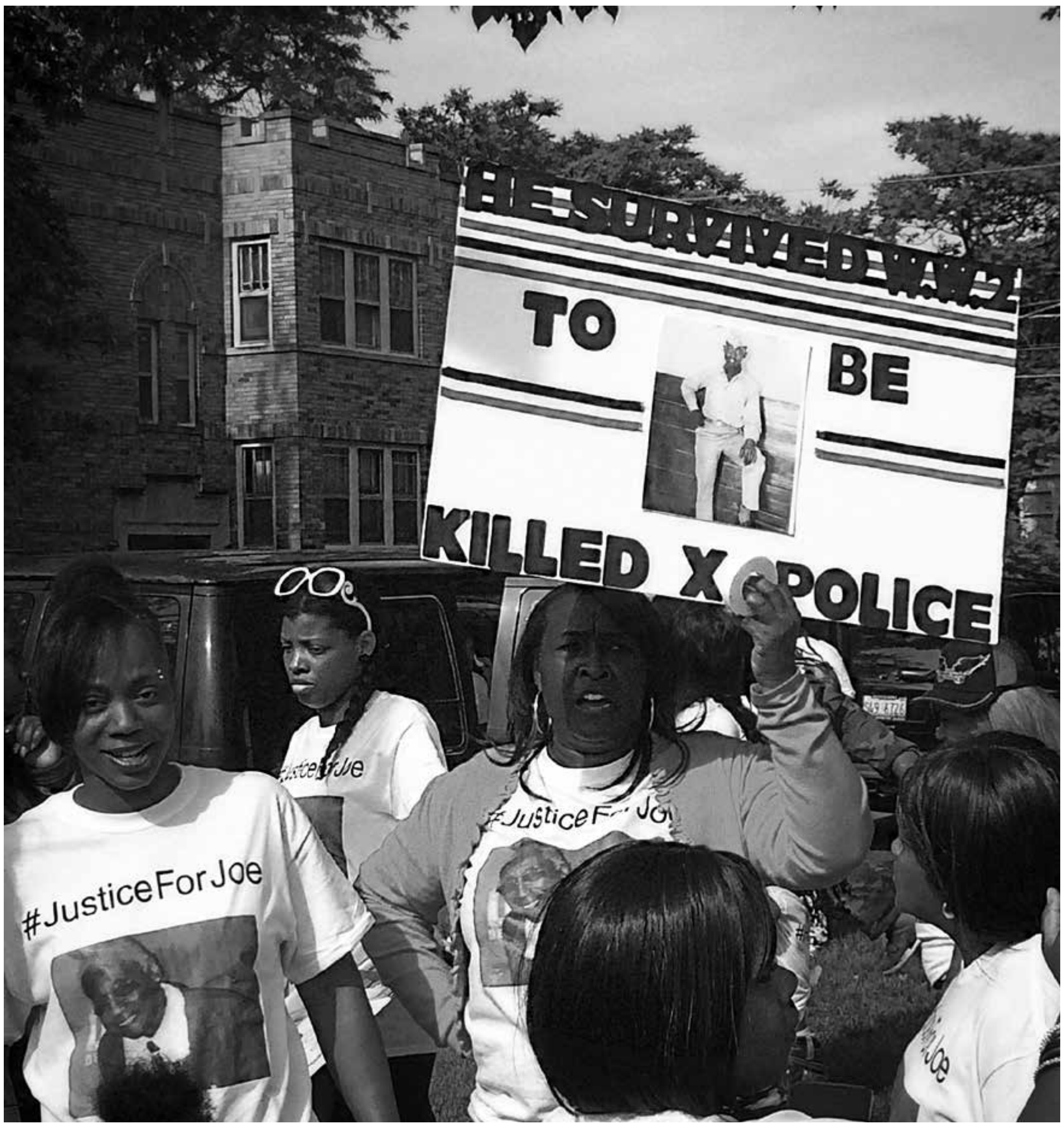
It is no wonder that some young people turn to drugs and violence in these conditions. There has been one murder and 19 shootings in the last three years. But in response, hundreds of police with helicopters overhead made a military incursion into the projects on June 4. They broke down doors with battering rams, trashed whole apartments, and handcuffed old women and children. Over 100 indictments were handed down, many more than the numbers who have been involved in gang activities. If any of these young men are convicted of even minor crimes, they will be banned from living with, or even visiting, their families. There is no doubt that fascism is here in the projects of NYC.

All the residents of Grant and Manhattanville are angry, as well they should be, although some say we just need better cops. Many have the illusion that better trained "community" police would keep young people on track and decrease crime. In reality, the role of the police is to protect the interests and property of the rich. The NYPD can shoot black and brown youth — murdered 16 in 2012 — with impunity and inner city youth rightly hate them. Seventy four percent of people shot in the first half of 2013 were black. Twenty two percent were Latino.

The young people do need to fight back, but it should be against racism, unemployment, poverty and lousy schools, not against each other.

We need to help build an ongoing organization among these tenants and youth that exposes the nature of the system and fights back militantly against this capitalist cesspool that is destroying its poorest workers and youth.✪

Stop Courtney Hill, Killer Cop



Women protest murder of Joe Huff. Sign reads, "He survived WWII to be killed [by] police."

CHICAGO, June 8 – "I'm here now trying to explain to you how my grandfather was killed by his next-door neighbor, who is a cop and is getting away with it. It just doesn't make sense."

That's how one relative described the April 24 murder of 86-year-old Joe Huff by Chicago cop Courtney Hill. Hill also shot Joe's 92-year-old wife Hazel three times, then had her arrested on charges of aggravated battery against a police officer. The Chicago Police Department (CPD) immediately cordoned off the Huff yard and tampered with the evidence to take the blame off killer cop Hill and his wife Kathy. The next day, the CPD announced that the shooting was justifiable.

Joe's relative made his comments during today's march, organized by the Huff family and friends to expose the CPD cover-up and demand that Hill be charged with murder.

As we marched down Carpenter St. with over 100 family and friends, many wore #HuffNation t-shirts. The streets echoed from neighbors and friends chanting, "Justice for Joe," "Hill you murderer," and "Everywhere you go, justice for Joe." Neighbors came out of their homes raising their fists in solidarity. The march ended in front of the Huff's home, as family and friends chanted, "Racist Hill you can't hide, we charge you with genocide." Hill and his family were on their porch laughing and making obscene comments as we marched by.

The Hills are black racists. For years they have harassed the Huff family and other neighbors on the block, where they are also landlords. Kathy Hill tries to run the neighborhood through bullying, intimidation and terror, showing the same racist disrespect for her black neighbors that the big capitalists exhibit toward black workers every day. Capitalism uses intimidation and terror to keep the working class in line. That's what the police are for. Why should his neighborhood be any different?

After years of racist harassment and continued abuse, Joe Huff had enough and went to get his gun. When he came back out, cop Hill killed Joe and shot Hazel. Kathy Hill was also shot during the melee. Family members and neighbors were outraged.



Communists Fight Racist Terror

Progressive Labor Party (PLP) was invited to the march by transit workers from the neighborhood. Several of Joe's relatives also work at Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), where we hope to build the fight against police terror. What would it have meant if hundreds of anti-racist transit workers walked off their jobs and marched to police headquarters to protest Joe's murder?

Transit workers know plenty about racist terror: the two-tier wage system that punishes younger workers; the blaming of workers whenever the bosses' conditions cause an accident; the constant harassment and terror on the job. CTA bosses have fired 800 mainly black workers over the last three years, as the union sat idly by. One worker was fired after the police filed a false report against him.

Back in the 1940s and 1950s, Chicago's communist-led meatpackers had a better idea. They fought racism on the job and racist terror against black workers who moved into previously all-white neighborhoods, linking the two. We can do better by attacking capitalism, the source of racism.

There is no justice for the working class under the racist profit system. For that, we need communist revolution. We will try to organize more CTA workers to join the Huff family Monday, June 23, at the 111 Street Courthouse at 1 PM.✪

UAW Convention
Opposition Emerges to Pro-Boss Misleaders

DETROIT, MI June 5 — The 36th United Auto Workers (UAW) Constitutional Convention ended today as delegates followed newly elected UAW President Dennis Williams and Teamster President James Hoffa across the street to the Crowne Plaza Hotel to support a union organizing campaign. Following Williams and Hoffa across the street is already more than they deserve.

The endless self-congratulations and standing ovations for all the "great labor leaders" crowded onto the stage stands in stark contrast to the miserable conditions faced by workers and retirees and the storm clouds gathering for the coming year. It stands in even greater contrast to the racist attacks by the bankers and auto bosses on the workers and youth who live in the City of Detroit, where the jails are full and unemployment is about 50%, and significantly higher for black youth.

The two main goals of the convention were to raise morale among the delegates, who are mostly elected officers and the base of the International leadership, and to raise the dues for the International union. The hot item was a 25% dues increase, the first since 1967, which will go entirely into the International Strike and Defense Fund.

The urgency behind the dues increase is that 50% of the UAW membership is now in anti-union Right to Work (RTW) states. If Ohio goes RTW, that will jump to 60%. When the contracts at GM, Ford, Chrysler and others expire next year, workers living in RTW states will have the option of quitting the union. What's more, in every RTW state there will be a massive campaign to win workers out of the UAW, financed by Grover Norquist and the Koch brothers, similar to the one that derailed the UAW campaign at VW earlier this year. The dues increase is mainly to try to aggressively counter the anti-UAW campaign, and to build a cushion against potentially big losses.

Much was said about the 2015 contract talks and the need to have a strong strike fund in order to "show the bosses we mean business" in closing the two-tier wage gap. But the odds of a strike in the auto industry are slim to none. The UAW leadership is partners with the bosses, even more so since the Obama administration orchestrated the 2009 federal takeover and bailout of the industry. The only two-tier gap that was closed this week was among the UAW staff, who went from starting at 70% pay and taking six years to reach full pay, to starting at 90% and taking three years to reach top pay.

Back at the worksites, there was mass resistance to the proposed dues hike. At some plants, local President's chose not to run for delegate rather than campaign for it. Every Ford assembly plant except one opposed the increase. One local President who ran in favor of the dues increase was defeated by a 3-1 margin. But that opposition was never organized to do battle on the convention floor and after some debate, it passed easily.

After more than 40 years of "Buy American" and partnering with the bosses, the UAW leadership has painted itself into a corner where they have to rely on the bosses to survive. This strategy has seen the union shrink from 1.5 million members to just under 400,000 and has left Detroit, Flint and many other auto towns in ruins. If they can't win some significant reform in the 2015 contracts, workers will be able to vote with their feet and resign from the union. The chickens have come home to roost.

Beneath the balloons and standing ovations, between the hospitality suites and Directors' dinners, despite the video message from Obama and the awards given to politicians, a battle was being waged to challenge the UAW leadership's grip on the workers. It's a struggle over whether we will be led by the Democratic Party to a future of fascism and war, or whether we can build a mass base for PLP and international communist revolution. This week, that struggle took place among a handful of delegates. Over the next year, it can grow.✪

Class Struggle, Not Lobbying, Path for Transit Workers

WASHINGTON, DC, May 20 — Today several hundred east coast transit workers, members of the Amalgamated Transit Union and the Transport Workers Union (TWU), rallied and lobbied Congress for increased capital funds (for buses, subway cars and new tracks) for city mass transit systems. International union officers spoke, along with former FBI stoolpigeon Al Sharpton. PLP members came to oppose the lobbying strategy and instead distributed hundreds of PL flyers calling for sharper class struggle against the racist attacks on transit workers throughout the country, a large proportion of whom are black and Latino.

The ongoing economic crisis of capitalism, the flyer noted, demonstrated the need for communist revolution to take power out of the hands of the bosses and put it into working-class hands. A communist workers' government would organize transit to meet the needs of workers and riders instead of the profits of the capitalists and bondholders.

The rally's speakers demonstrated misleadership at its highest level. President John Samuelson of New York's TWU Local 100 sang the praises of their new contract with the city's Metropolitan Transit Authority bosses. Rank-and-file New York TWU members at the rally said, however, that the agreement was trash. It had been ratified, they said, because they saw no other option — there was no fight-back planned by the leadership.

Several PL transit workers and their friends who passed out PLP's flyer learned that, without a doubt, it was up to us to organize class struggle, since our union leaders have long given up on serious battles against the bosses. Transit workers are under sharp attack since they're generally better paid than the average worker and the bosses want to push them back down, using racism to divide and isolate the workers from the rest of the working class.

To resist attacks, it is critical for transit workers to go beyond their own immediate interests and build anti-racist and revolutionary politics among themselves as well as the general community. Then a broad militant class struggle against the bosses can be built in cities with major transit systems — uniting black, Latino, white and immigrant workers. This can turn the sharp attack against us into a resurgent working-class movement that can fight effectively against the bosses and move our class towards revolution.✪

"We're sick of them treating us like scum!"

SAN FRANCISCO, June 7 — "We're sick of them treating us like scum!" That's how one bus operator explained the massive three-day sick-out at the MTA (mass transit) that kept two-thirds of city buses parked in the garage. On June 2, MUNI bus operators, members of TWU Local 250-A, showed tremendous unity and their potential power. This was the biggest service disruption since the strike in 1976.

Another operator reported that one of the bosses' negotiating team "threw the union proposals in the garbage can." Another said, "They are trying to do away with pensions..." Once the job action started it spread like wildfire. As another operator pointed out, "Racial or ethnic divisions don't work. We are all brown." [referring to the brown MUNI uniform] A sick-out of 70% only happens when everyone participates."

The job action followed a 96% rejection of the SFMTA's rotten, take-away contract offer on May 30; 1028-"NO" to 47-"YES." The bosses are trying to cut wages, make us pay more for a shrinking pension, and want to speed up full-time operators and the growing part-time labor force. They also want racist cuts in off-peak and community service to transit isolated neighborhoods. The MTA temporarily backed off demanding mandatory arbitration and agreed to restart mediation with the union.



Fear turned to anger as operators took matters into their own hands. PLP has a long fighting history in this vital workforce. A new generation of operators may be picking up the torch as MUNI workers are standing up to a sickening contract and rejecting powerless negotiations. We have confidence that the working class can and will fight back. It is our job to make sure that when they do, that more of them choose the road to communist revolution.✪

Transit Workers' Power Can Cripple Bosses' Profits

SAN FRANCISCO — The U.S. capitalist class is competing for domination and control of energy, basic resources and cheap labor worldwide. Meanwhile, they own trillions of capital (money) which they refuse to invest until they're guaranteed the higher rate of profit resulting from the devastating cuts in the cost of labor. Mass transit, roads and bridges are falling apart, workers are unemployed, and yet there is "no money for infrastructure."



Monopoly of power and money determines the policies of local government agencies like the San Francisco Metropolitan Transit Authority (SFMTA) governing the city's mass transit and its political apparatus. This is the driving force behind the attacks on the whole working class, both public and private sectors. The capitalist class uses its control of the social, political, police, courts and mass media apparatus to rule and make the working class pay for its rule through taxes, interest on public debt, credit and low wages). Communists call this the state apparatus. The local Mayor and SFMTA implement these attacks.

Transit Worker Power Can Halt City

Globally, transit workers have the power to bring capitalism's daily functioning to a screeching halt. This is the irreconcilable conflict between transit workers' and riders' needs on the one hand and the MTA budget-cutting dictated by the downtown big businesses (i.e., capitalism). This conflict produced an explosion on June 2 when two-thirds of MUNI operators called in sick, crippling normal business and profits. (See above article.)

Populations and production are more concentrated in congested urban areas. Therefore, transit workers are a vital link in the profit chain of the big corporations, finance capitalists like banks, and big retail. SF-MUNI alone moves over 700,000 people a day in a city with a population of 826,000. SF Muni's infrastructure helps make San Francisco the "Gateway to the East."

In addition, transit labor indirectly produces profits for real estate owners. It's estimated that SF MUNI adds up to $35/per square foot to rental or sale prices of downtown commercial property. Big buildings have no value if no one can get to them.

The same corporate/financial groups also control the state apparatus. In transit here, their mass media, their electoral process and their court system have not only attacked Muni operators' wages and working conditions but have reinforced institutional racism. A series of take-away contracts and arbitration has destroyed work rules and benefits won over the past 40 years. Inaction of Transit Workers Union Local 250a leadership has sealed the deal.

For example, a media campaign financed by two billionaires — recipients of big tax breaks — put so-called pension reform (i.e., cuts) on the ballot spreading lies that "transit workers are overpaid" and "fail to provide on time, reliable transit"; that "bloated pensions are bankrupting the Pension Fund and endangering SF's financial health."

A group of the SF's wealthy 1% used the ballot initiative process to pass Proposition G, installing arbitration with no right to strike. It guaranteed that the MTA can cut labor costs because it represents "the public interest" and removed all past practice precedents.

The press was full of thinly veiled racial profiling to fan the flames against the mainly black, Latino and immigrant workforce. The ruling class is trying to force this vital group of workers to work for less and to isolate and marginalize them in order to undermine their potential power.

Again, a sickout led by the rank and file has now shown a way to challenge the deal.✪

Schistosomiasis: Capitalism Kills Again

Along the shores of Lake Malawi in Africa schistosomiasis — a disease that causes abdominal pain, diarrhea, malnutrition and in long-term cases liver damage, kidney failure, and even infertility — has become common over the last few decades. According to a medical researcher in the area the disease has become ubiquitous, "In some villages around Lake Malawi up to 70 percent of the people and 95 percent of schoolchildren are infected" (*All Things Considered*, 5/28). Lake Malawi is no small region either, it is about the size of New Jersey and borders Tanzania, Mozambique, and Malawi with over 14 million people living on its shores.

One perspective is that the outbreak is caused by parasitic worms whose life cycle takes them from snails on the lake's shoreline to the intestinal tract of people and back again. Another view might argue that the disease is caused by overfishing in the lake that has removed the snail's primary predator and by increased farming in the area that has raised sediment levels along the shoreline making them an even more favorable environment for the worm-carrying snails. Finally one might argue that the profit motive in agricultural production has forced millions of people to pack in around the lake's shores so that they can overfarm the land and overfish the water, creating the perfect conditions for an outbreak of schistosomiasis.

One analysis mechanically looks at the life-cycle of the disease. The other examines its root cause. In capitalist production the seizing of profit is the only concern while the pillaging of the environment and the damage it causes to the workers forced to live there is ignored or dishonestly rebranded an act of nature.

Today health officials seem flummoxed on how to stop the spread of schistosomiasis along Lake Malawi's shores, but half a century ago a similar mass outbreak in China was contained and the disease eliminated within less than a decade. Thousands were organized to comb river banks finding the snails one by one and killing them until the parasite was eliminated. As English surgeon Dr. Joshua Horn noted, the mass campaign against the river snails was only made possible by a communist mass political line (*Away With All Pests*). In capitalist Africa today this is impossible. The profit system does not allow for thousands of people to abandon "productive" labor — labor that makes a capitalist profit — to engage in "unproductive" labor, the kind of work that would improve the living conditions of millions.

Horn stressed the Chinese Communist Party's reliance on the peasantry and their knowledge in dealing with the fight against the snails writing, "To mobilize the masses does not mean to issue them shovels and instructions; it means to fire them with enthusiasm, to release their initiative and tap their wisdom." Along the shores of Lake Malawi no capitalist is interested in firing up the enthusiasm of the working class. After all, once the working class killed the parasites along the lake they might turn their sights on the capitalist parasites that daily rob them of their labor and health.✪

Racist Bosses Dump Pre-School Literacy Program

LOS ANGELES, June 18 — This school year, my three-year old son and I attended a school program called Family Literacy. The program is scheduled for half a day and is designed for 2-to-5 year-old children to learn phonemic awareness and social skills while the parents are receiving English instruction in another classroom. Not only are the children learning but they also have the opportunity to interact with their parents at certain times during the day.

Three weeks before the school year ended, teachers and staff got the news: we had one week to pack up all our belongings and school material and turn it in to the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). These racist district officials told the school staff that no school funds are available for the program serving immigrant families, which was operating on a grant from First Five LA.

Fighting this massive cut and not giving up, teachers, staff, parents, and children have led rallies in front of LAUSD headquarters, inside the Board of Education meetings and last week in front of one of the four schools involved. Reporters from a local radio station and major TV channel interviewed parents and children at these rallies. Mothers, students, and staff shouted their anger at the abrupt termination of a program that has been recognized nationally for its approach to cooperative learning and job skill effectiveness.

The racist LAUSD does not want to provide funding for this program ($750,000 out of a $6 billion budget!) because it benefits immigrant families and working-class parents who are learning English as a second language and completing their GED (exam leading to a certificate of high school equivalency). These parents who cannot afford childcare or private schools. Because the program is for children and adults, it is funded under the Adult Education budget, which the racist LAUSD continues to cut. Teachers and staff will lose their jobs.

What do they want to fund? School superintendent John Deasy and the Board of Ed want to implement the use of IPADS in the classroom. This will only benefit Deasy's ruling-class friends, who have invested their capital in selling their software to the district. Cutting programs for working-class families — whether in education, jobs, or healthcare — continues as corporations like Apple and banks struggle to gain more profit.

This is a good example of how capitalism imposes limits on the working class's ability to meet its basic needs for work, housing, food, education, and healthcare. With communism, the working class can change education so that it won't be based on profits. Having participated in this rally and attended the program I understand the need to organize those close to me and win them to fight for a communist future.✪

France: RR Strikers Challenge EU Profit Edict

PARIS, June 16 — Tens of thousands of railroad workers are striking the government-owned railroads against a proposed law that would split the system into three public companies. It would open the railroads to private company competition in accordance with a 1991 European Union (EU) deregulation directive 91/440.

The workers refuse to bow down to an EU globalization plan laid down for all countries in the EU: turning public-service railroads into for-profit railroads. The workers know that this is a capitalist scheme to push through a race to the bottom, channeling everyone into the worst possible working conditions and wages existing in the most backward countries in the EU.

The Socialist government is introducing legislation to do this in France. Already the French national budget for 2014 includes an austerity plan to eliminate 2,500 jobs.

The system is drowning under a 40-billion euro debt (US $55 billion) incurred when the high-speed rail system was developed in the 1980s. The EU's destruction of public sector monopolies in passenger and freight transport, scheduled for 2019, will lead to creeping privatization. The government officially plans to stabilize the public railroad company's debt, but reducing the debt to allow the public company to compete with private railroad companies will depend on even more job cuts and the worsening of working conditions. The bosses want to "save the system" on the workers' backs, axing their jobs and throwing safety out the window.

As one 30-year veteran locomotive driver said, "I'll tell you what I see from my cab. Management talks to us about safety, but it's the high-speed train that is clipping the branches off the trees! We sounded the alarm a dozen times and the hierarchy plays dead. We're fed up with bailing out a company that is taking on water" (Liberation newspaper, 6/15).

A TV report recounting the "comfort" of train drivers disgusted him. "Come and see… It seems we have bucket seats and a micro-wave oven! But we don't even have toilets!"



CAEN, FRANCE, June 13 — Striking rail workers blocking the tracks.

The unions that called the strike are not challenging the EU dictum that the rail network has to be opened up to private company competition. They're not challenging the fact that the capitalists are using the EU to make these so-called reforms obligatory. They're just advocating a different reform that would be less unfavorable to the workers, to maintain reunification of the whole rail system. Nor are they organizing for Europe-wide working-class unity or building ties with rail workers in Germany, Britain and Italy to oppose these pro-capitalist reforms.

The walkout began on June 10. Every 24 hours workers across France hold local general assemblies and vote on continuing the strike. The workers are demanding that the government postpone introducing legislation (scheduled for June 17) in the French National Assembly and that the government rewrite the law to suit them. Workers have blocked tracks in a number of cities and the rank and file appears to be highly mobilized, ahead of the union leadership and intent on broadening the strike. Only the largest and third-largest of the six rail unions are striking, with possibly half of the 250,000 rail workers participating.

The workers are caught between a public-sector rail company that answers to a bosses' government which does not have to represent the workers' or riders' interest and a bosses' plan to have private companies run the industry with even greater ability to oppress the workers. The union leaders do not challenge the capitalist system that presents these "choices" to the workers but rather look to the crumbs of a reform that would be "less unfavorable" to the workers.

There is no communist leadership to advocate a real alternative, a system run by and for the workers, with no bosses, profits or reliance on a bosses' government. That is the only answer to the problems these strikers and all workers face. The organization of a communist party must become the future for these workers and the whole working class.✪

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

Seattle Minimum Wage Hike Headed Downward

The Seattle city council voted to be the second city in the U.S., behind SeaTac, to adopt a $15-per-hour minimum wage. Mayor Ed Murray praised the resolution as a "model for the rest of the nation to follow" after it passed unanimously (Seattle Times, 6/2).

This however was all a show. Murray has spent the last six months trying to undermine the push for a minimum wage hike. All of the city council members save one, Kshama Sawant, has been fighting this raise tooth and nail since a mass movement forced it into the political arena a year ago. It was workers in the street participating in fast food strikes and showing up by the thousands over the last two May Day marches demanding $15 now that has forced the hand of the political establishment. Were they not to pass their watered-down minimum wage resolution now, a referendum would have been on the next ballot for an immediate wage hike that has 68% support in the city (*The Stranger*, 2/12).

And this resolution is heavily watered down. The wage hike will be incremental, taking eight years before it is in effect for all workers. Larger employers will have from 3-4 years to comply and "small businesses" — hilariously defined as any company with less than 500 workers — have 5-7 years to reach the $15 target. Further the process of ratcheting up the minimum wage has been pushed back from January to April. All of this is to ensure the maximum possible depreciation caused by inflation. If we assume the same inflation rate over the last eight years the $15 minimum wage will depreciate by 15 percent effectively making it $12.76-per-hour when it finally takes effect in 2021. And this doesn't even get into the "training wage" that it allows for teenagers (allowing for hyper-exploitation of child labor) and disabled workers.

While being the face of capitalism in Seattle, Ed Murray, praised the bill through gritted teeth, the business community has already begun to undermine the measure. A business front group called Forward Seattle plans to put its own referendum on the next ballot that would create a Charter Amendment — which would supersede the current resolution and is harder to repeal — that incrementally raises the wage to $12.50 by 2020 (about $11.35 in 2014 dollars). The International Franchise Association has vowed to sue over the wage hike, a tactic that worked to undermine the SeaTac measure earlier this year. And Tim Eyman — a David Koch of sorts for state politics — plans to put an initiative in front of the state legislature that prohibits cities and counties from adopting their own minimum wage standards (*The Stranger*, 6/4).

But the biggest obstacle to $15-per-hour is the refusal of government agencies to enforce any measure seen as protecting workers against their boss's total control. An anti-wage theft ordinance was passed last year, but city officials have refused to enforce it. Mandatory sick leave was passed in the city, but not a single employer has been sanctioned, despite 40 percent of companies refusing to comply with the ordinance. The capitalist class is always happy to promise pay that they will never give out.

It took workers in the street demanding a wage hike to get this resolution passed. It will take workers in the street to force the capitalist class to abide by this new resolution. Still, even if we forced Seattle's capitalists to make good on $15-per-hour they would simply lie in wait picking at the edges until they undermined the reform. Ultimately workers need to ditch this exploitative system altogether. Fighting for a higher minimum wage helps to expose the exploitation of the system, but only revolutionary politics will get rid of the indignities of capitalism once and for all.

Red Beard

GPCR: Inequality, Selfishness Not Part of Human Nature

The fourth entry of the series on the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) in CHALLENGE from 4/23/14 to 6/4/14 tells of the disintegration of not only the GPCR in the late 1960s, but of the entire revolution that had taken China from the dark ages of colonial exploitation to a socialist society in 1949, one that inaccurately called itself "communist." The gains even under socialism made by hundreds of millions of Chinese workers and peasants, not least in the rural areas, were among the greatest and fastest improvements in conditions for the vast majority in the history of the world. Only the Soviet Union in its first few decades matched this record. Illiteracy was eliminated, health care was guaranteed for all, universal education reigned, and poverty, homelessness, and hunger were abolished, all through collectivity.

That article was very instructive in showing how the reintroduction of private property degrades collective and cooperative social relationships that benefit all. It is much easier to see when actual conditions run from collectivity to individualism, rather than our having to imagine their running in the opposite direction. In distributing previously collectively owned means of production and giving it to various individuals, the by-then corrupt and capitalist-minded Chinese leadership created a small number of increasingly rich at the expense of a vast number of increasingly poor.

In the world's capitalist societies, it is clear that a very large majority of the working class can barely sustain ourselves and many of us continually teeter on the brink of utter destruction in the form of hunger, homelessness, unemployment, drug addiction, maiming and death in the military — and underlying all these and hindering us from fighting back — racist and sexist discrimination and super-exploitation. The existence of such inequality is always said by the capitalists to be the fault of that majority. Their propagandists get away with this lie through the fiction of "human nature," in which people are said to be incapable of change and some are simply said to be born more capable than others. Added to which everyone is said to be constitutionally selfish and is always trying to better their own position at the expense of others.

But China is a society that degraded itself in the late 1960s, starting from a position of hard-won collectivity and cooperation in which all workers benefited. Losers, if any, were few and far between. Then with the defeat of the GPCR the corrupt leadership forced conditions to deteriorate back to capitalist competition and individualism (selfishness). This earthshaking experience in China makes it much clearer that the inequality of the revived capitalism there has nothing to do with selfishness and varying degrees of competence, since those did not exist before. Rather it has everything to do with the traitorous actions of the leading party that has the gall to still call itself "communist." They do so to attempt to fool the workers of the world.

With competition there are guaranteed losers, while with cooperation it is the absence of losers that can be guaranteed, as each helps all. The capitalists worldwide turn the focus away from the ubiquitous losers and pretend either that they don't exist or that it is our own fault. They focus instead on the small number of winners to try to attract workers to climbing over their neighbors' backs to achieve similar status. But it is clear, from the experience of the defeat of the GPCR, that selfishness and competition, rather than being fixed characteristics of a mythological "human nature," is structurally inherent in capitalism. That is why the PLP fights to abolish it. Join us.

Saguaro Rojo

Soviets Outfoxed Imperialists

Whenever the facts surface of how the Soviet (workers' councils) Red Army defeated the Nazis in World War II, the imperialist-controlled media is quick to say that the Hitler-Soviet non-aggression pact was a betrayal of the British and French (allies) to the Nazis.

Italian and German fascists' movements were organized in the 1920s and thirties to destroy the worldwide communist movement of workers inspired by the 1917 Soviet revolution against their capitalist bosses. Fascist movements were supported by the big imperialist powers like Britain and France along with the U.S. where regular pro-Nazi radio broadcasts by anti-communist Catholic labor unions and mass fascist rallies in Madison Square Garden occurred. The imperialist allies' strategy was to appease worldwide German and Italian aggression and encourage it to attack the Soviet Union whose ideas threatened all imperialists.

The Soviets knew that the Nazis were planning to invade the USSR and pleaded with the allies many times to join in a war against Hitler if he continued to invade other countries. The allies refused because they believed their great empires were too strong for Hitler to attack and they really wanted their two enemies, Germany and the Soviets, to destroy each other while they waited out the war.

Stalin understood the imperialists' strategy and also Hitler's fear of another two-front (East and West) conflict like World War I that defeated Germany. So Stalin accepted the German offer of a non-aggression pact to turn Hitler's drive for empire away from the Soviet Union towards the British and French empires whose "great" armies were demolished by the Nazis in a few months.



The short time won by the non-aggression pact allowed the Soviets to move most of their industries beyond the Ural Mountains, out of range of German bombers, where they built the tanks and planes that helped the Red Army destroy the Nazi invasion.

A Comrade

In Memory of Comrade Steve Carl

On May 10 a dear comrade, Steve Carl, died from extensive lung cancer at age 69. Steve was much too young to die, but he was yet another victim of profit-mad capitalism. While he had smoked more than 40 years ago — feeding the profits of the killer tobacco industry — he had also worked at Inland Steel around that time. Like all workers, he had given them far more in back-breaking labor time than he ever received in wages. He remembered coming home from work every day and coughing up black junk for an hour, until he could breathe a little more easily. In addition, most of his fellow workers smoked, and second-hand smoke contributed to his cancer. After leaving Inland he became a teacher in Chicago.

Steve was the embodiment of the communist spirit. As a social studies teacher, first at King High School and later at Hyde Park Career Academy, two impoverished black schools on Chicago's South Side, Steve taught the truth about the capitalist system to thousands of students, over the years. He was highly regarded by his students and their parents, not only because of his teaching, but because of the respect and care he had for each of them. In the 1980's, he routinely brought at least a bus full of students to PLP's May Day marches.

Steve lived modestly. He preferred good times with friends and family to material goods. He created beautiful paintings from acrylic and nail polish, which were presented at a show in downtown Chicago titled "Dialectical Expressionism." The show's brochure included a brief explanation of dialectical materialism (the Marxist scientific approach to revolution). He retired from high school teaching when the school administration insisted he teach from a canned curriculum, implemented draconian discipline policies against students, and emphasized test-prep over deep understanding. That was not what Steve became a teacher to do!

Steve was very active in the Chicago Chapter of a group called the International Committee Against Racism (InCAR). On the several occasions when he invited one of the co-chairpersons of InCAR to speak to his high school students, Steve always guaranteed a large turnout. He was able to do this because he fought against racism and was very popular with his black students. In later years the InCAR chairperson would often run into some of Steve's students who remembered how he brought them under the influence of multiracial unity, enabling them to remain as progressives, capable of relating to political constituents of all colors.

In later years, after he retired, Steve split his time between his house in Dillon, Montana and the house of his partner (Marylou, called Lou) in a suburb of Phoenix, Arizona. He joined various community groups and continued to offer communist analyses of events for his friends and neighbors. Both he and Lou were painters, in very different styles, but occasionally they would paint a canvas together, with Steve providing an abstract overlay to Lou's landscapes. They jointly ran an art gallery in Dillon and were joined by other local artists.

Steve is survived by Lou, as well as his son and two daughters from earlier marriages. He will be sorely missed by all who knew him, and the working class has been robbed of a staunch defender and fighter.

Chicago Comrades

Soviets, Not D-Day, Smashed the Nazis

On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of D-Day, the U.S.-British invasion of Western Europe on June 6, 1944, we've been saturated with a barrage of lies telling us how the U.S. won the Second World War. The decisive role of the Soviet Red Army and working class will be deliberately underplayed or ignored altogether to avoid recognizing the fact that it was the communist-led Soviet Union under the leadership of Josef Stalin that defeated Hitler's Nazi armies.

As Benjamin Schwarz, national editor of the Atlantic Monthly, wrote in the New York Times, "Military historians have always known that the main scene of the Nazis' downfall was the Eastern Front, which claimed 80 percent of all German military casualties in the war…. The four-year conflict between the Wehrmacht and the Red Army remains the largest and possibly most ferocious ever fought,….arguably the single most important chapter in modern military history.

During the entire war, more than 70 percent of the active fascist troops in Europe were fighting the Red Army. The British were engaging only four German divisions in North Africa. When the Allies landed in western France on the Normandy beaches, they faced three German divisions. The main reason was that more than 100 divisions from all over Europe had to be rushed to the East where the Red Army was moving 40 miles a day westward, crushing the fascist forces. More than a million Nazi troops were destroyed just by Soviet partisan units behind enemy lines, more than all the U.S. and British forces had destroyed during the entire war.

Over 25 million Soviet workers and soldiers died fighting Hitler's armies. The U.S. lost 400,000 all told, in Europe and the Pacific.

In the winter of 1941, when the Nazis approached Moscow, 25 miles from the Kremlin, the entire population rose up in defense. Men joined the militia units at the front. Women and youth spent weeks out in the bitter cold, digging anti-tank ditches. Then the Soviet forces counter-attacked, pushing the enemy more than 100 miles from the city. This was the first large-scale defeat suffered by the Nazis. It was the beginning of their annihilation, six months after they had invaded. The New York Times military editor, Hanson Baldwin, along with scores of Western "experts," had predicted the Soviets would be defeated in six weeks.

The turning point came in the battle of Stalingrad, in the winter of 1942-43, which virtually all capitalist historians have called the turning point of World War II. Soviet defenders fought battles house-to-house. Women and men voluntarily remained at their machines making tanks for the battlefield just outside their factories while bombs fell all around them. If ever an example is needed of communist spirit, it is Stalingrad. The Soviets surrounded and destroyed three fascist armies, causing 1.5 million Nazi casualties. After Stalingrad, the battlefield moved in only one direction — westward.

From 1941 to the spring of 1944, U.S.-British strategy was to wait until the Nazis and Soviets were fatigued fighting each other and then enter the war to get quick victories. It had delayed opening a second front in France for two years, until mid-1944, when it became apparent that if they didn't the Soviets would be able to liberate all of Europe from the Nazi yoke. The Second Front was opened to stop the communist advance beyond Berlin.

In "A War to Be Won" (Harvard, 2009) by historians Williamson Murray and Allan Millett, they called the Soviets' brilliant use of encirclement and what they called "deep battle" — extremely far-reaching advances behind the enemy's lines — constituted the most innovative and devastating display of "operational art" in World War II. Col. David Glantz, of the U.S. War College, marveled that close to one-half of wartime Soviet operations involving hundreds of thousands of Red Army soldiers are simply "missing form history," either neglected or covered up.

So when liar-in-chief Obama set foot in Normandy to praise the U.S "victors" in World War II — after having promised another billion dollars to European allies for coming wars — the workers of the world should salute the true heroes who defeated the Nazi armies, the communist-led Red Army and working class of the Soviet Union.✪

'Let's thank the Russians for our lives'

In a letter to New York Newsday, a WW II vet wrote that "Countless American baby boomers…owe their existence to the Red Army….

"Ask any veteran about the fighting on Omaha Beach…or the Battle of the Bulge….to imagine fighting a German army two to three times larger, a German army not already reeling from two years of defeat in the East.

"The Russians, Winston Churchill said, tore the guts out of the German army. Every German soldier they killed, captured or disabled meant one less for our men to fight. Stalingrad was an American victory in which no American fought.

"Had the Red Army folded in 1941 or 1942, American soldiers — our fathers — would have had to overcome at least 100 more German divisions. American casualties would have been almost beyond imagination.

"We baby boomers are here in our millions because Russian soldiers fought and died in their millions. Because they did, our fathers came home…. Let's…thank the Russians for our fathers — and our lives."

Hollywood Version of World War II

And in a letter to the New York Times Book Review, a British citizen wrote: "As a Briton living in the United States, I occasionally hear an obnoxious taunt from Americans: 'We saved you in World War II…. Roosevelt saved Western civilization….'

"The military force that 'saved Western civilization' was the Soviet Union; 80 percent of German military casualties…were inflicted on the Eastern Front….

"It's time to give up on the Hollywood version of World War II."

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

U.S. Jim Crow aped Nazi 'master race'

NYT, 5/31 — The Jim Crow-era United States [was]…a time when federal policies towards black people resembled the "master race" theories of the Nazis….

The Pentagon, which opened in 1943, was furnished with 284… bathrooms — twice the number needed for the workforce. This was to accommodate Jim Crow laws that defined black people as a lesser species of human being….These laws barred black people from contact with white people in…schools, restaurants, public conveyances and hospitals that turned away black patients when no "Negro beds" were available….

The Roosevelt….administration had validated the idea of eugenics by insisting that blood banks serving the military be segregated by race so that white soldiers would not be fearful of receiving Negro blood.

….The government had kept blacks in separate units with Jim Crow housing and transportation systems, thus spreading the poison of segregation to parts of the country where it had not been a way of life.

The Army…raised the ire of the black population by deliberately placing black troops under the command of white southerners, who were said to "understand" them better.

….A white commander at a camp not far from Philadelphia threatened black soldiers with execution if they were found in the company of white women….

Military leaders drove the federal government's decision to embrace segregation in a way that would make it that much more difficult to dislodge.

Clinton lauds N.Y.U. president at slave labor campus

NYT, 5/26 — ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates — Former President Bill Clinton….delivering the graduation speech at the [NYU] campus [here]….expressed support for his friend John Sexton, N.Y.U.'s president,…while voicing "concern" about treatment of foreign laborers who helped construct the building where the ceremony was held. The abusive practices includ[ed] underpayment of wages and overcrowded living conditions….Mr. Clinton's speech avoided any criticism of N.Y.U or the United Arab Emirates….

…A vast majority of…construction workers interviewed by the [NY Times] were not allowed to keep their own passports and most had paid up to a year's salary in advance to land jobs that typically earned less than $300 month. Others said they were imprisoned, beaten and deported for striking.

Capitalism + church = child killers in Ireland

The Catholic Church in Ireland is facing fresh accusations of child neglect after a researcher found records for hundreds of children said to be buried in unmarked graves at the site of a former home for unwed mothers [run by Catholic nuns].

The researcher...suggested that many of the children's remains lie in the site of an old septic tank.

County Galway death records showed that the children, mostly babies and toddlers, had died, often of sickness or disease, during the 35 years the home operated from 1926 to 1961.... The building, which had previously been a workhouse for homeless adults, was torn down decades ago to make way for houses.

A 1944 government inspection recorded evidence of malnutrition among some of the 271 children then living in the Tuam orphanage alongside 61 unwed mothers. The death records cited sicknesses, diseases, deformities and premature births as causes.

The Irish government has declined to comment.

Obama's nuclear 'law and order'

le Canard enchaine, 6/11 — PARIS — According to the French intelligence services, U.S. bombers have arrived in Great Britain with nuclear weapons….

…It was difficult to conceal the arrival of these enormous international aircraft (eight jet engines) which can drop missiles and bombs from an altitude of 15,000 to 20,000 meters [65,000 feet]….For some years now, only the ships of the US Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean were armed with this type of arsenal.

Obama has obtained a 1-billion-credit…to deploy supplementary military means in central and eastern Europe, and to organize joint maneuvers there with certain local armies, and even to develop a naval presence in the Black Sea (south of Russia) and in the Baltic Sea (north of Russia)….

A "small team" of American soldiers would soon go to Kiev ([Ukraine]….[for] "support in matters of training, development and aid" to the armed forces and border guards.

Qatar's 'modern slavery' building for 2022 World Cup

NYT, 6/10 — ….Complaints about…slave labor, [and] an epidemic of worker deaths [are being] associated with Qatar's successful 2022 World Cup bid….

…The Guardian reported…on abuse of workers from Nepal and India, including multiple deaths that occurred amid inhuman conditions at the dozen stadiums planned for the games….Foreign workers cannot…leave the country without permission from their Qatari sponsors, making them powerless to resist abusive treatment.

One international trade union called it a "system of modern slavery."

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PLP.ORG

World Cup 2014: Attack on Workers in Brazil



Homeless workers' movement marches in São Paulo

Protests against the World Cup won't stop. Teachers, doctors, transit and arline unions have struck. Neighborhood organizations are on the march. The state's response is typical: brutal repression by the police and military against the demonstrations. The Brazilian bosses have done everything to satisfy FIFA (International Federation of Associated Football), including a $9 billion investment to remodel and construct the stadiums. Meanwhile, the masses of workers are poverty-stricken. One of four is illiterate. Health care is awful and living conditions for most is abominable. The average monthly income is $250.

In this context, the state violence against residents of the favelas [poor workers' neighborhoods] was aimed to control workers' anger and guarantee the safety of local and foreign investors. Approximately 250,000 workers have been kicked out of the favelas. In cities like Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, those still in the fight have been isolated in a kind of social apartheid in the name of improving districts around the stadiums. Brazilian cops have been trained for this work in places like Haiti, where the police are well known as killers by students and workers. That's the role the Brazilian government has prepared them to play to guarantee the success of the World Cup.

Workers' Party Anti-Worker

In past issues of CHALLENGE, we have reported on false left parties in Brazil like the Workers' Party (PT), which lead workers to political suicide. The country's current president, Dilma Rousseff, is the leader of PT. The party is said to fight for workers, another great capitalist lie to disillusion us and make us cynical. Workers are organizing and fighting every day against violent evacuations, where the government has yet to offer alternative housing. In April, in the Favela Telerj in Rio de Janeiro, dozens of families were ejected from their homes with only the clothes on their backs. (They weren't even allowed to gather their identification documents.) With no place to go, these families are demanding a solution from the government. Two months later, they continue to camp in front of the town hall. Unfortunately, workers who organize and fight only for reforms won't get far.

Many Brazilian families have lost their homes thanks to the circus executed by FIFA and supported by the government and transnational capitalists like McDonald's, Nike, Adidas, Coca Cola, GM, and Toyota. Millions of alienated soccer fans have been misled into believing the business of soccer is more important than any social problem.

Under Portuguese control until 1822, Brazil exploited nearly five million African slaves. Today the racist exploitation of their descendants continues to create billions of dollars in profits for national and international capitalists, mainly those in Germany, the U.S. and (most recently) China. Although slavery was abolished officially here in 1888, it was replaced by capitalist wage slavery. Black Brazilians, who represent 51 percent of a population of 200 million, earn less than half the rate paid to white workers.

We are clear that no fight for reforms can solve the disaster of capitalism. Under communism, we will have our own games, but they will be comradely, for health and workers' enjoyment — not for profit. This is one more reason we have to fight the exploitation by the bosses. We must organize Progressive Labor Party to destroy capitalism and create a society run for and by the working class. Only communism will liberate us from the prison of profits and money. Join us!✪



São Paulo, April 29 — About 1,500 marched in a World Cup demonstration. Many clashed with military cops spraying tear gas.